

ONCOMING TRAFFIC

by

Kyle T. Wilson

Kyle T. Wilson, copyright 2005  
2524 W. 4th St., Apt. 207  
Los Angeles, CA 90057  
323.397.7341  
Kyletwilson@sbcglobal.net

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

MONA, a working mother

SETTING:

A busy crosswalk, present day.

## ONCOMING TRAFFIC

BY KYLE T. WILSON

THE LIGHTS RISE on a MONA with a stroller. She is stuck in a crosswalk. Her hand extended as if to try to stop the oncoming traffic. The sound of a car whizzing by.

MONA

Stop! Stop! I have an infant here!

(She yanks the carriage back in fright. Then moves forward, fearful of the lane behind her. She then shouts at the car, now long gone--)

Asshole!

(She clasps her hand over her mouth.)

Keep it clean, Mona. Keep it clean.

(A beat. She composes herself. She realizes where she is.)

Get out of the intersection, Mona!

(She starts to move again. The sound of a car approaching. She sticks out her hand again. The screech of brakes. But too late. She yanks the stroller back again. Again moves quickly forward, afraid of the other lane.)

Dear God, why, WHY can't a city planner just put a stop light here? Don't they see me? Don't they see how I struggle? Don't they see my panic? My little Angel almost turned to roadkill here in this crosswalk that is supposed to be for PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC, to which AUTOMOTIVE TRAFFIC is supposed to yield?

(Another car whizzes by. She shakes her fist and yells-

Mother-and-child-hater!

(A short beat. She looks down at the stroller.)

I am sincerely at the end of my rope here. I mean, I stand here, trapped, infant in tow, a Pieta-turned-road-hazard to these ANIMALS!

(She collapses onto the street, sobs.)

My god, is this how I'm going to spend the next 21 years of your life? The next thirty? Will I ever get you home?

## MONA (CONT'D)

No, of course not, you and I will be forever dodging traffic, won't we? With any luck we'll make it to curbside when we're both elderly, tire marks on our foreheads, fender shrapnel protruding from our skin, picking the glass of shattered windshields from our hair. You'll be lucky to make it to my funeral, my dear Angel, because I am not, not, NOT equipped to get you out of this intersection!

(More sobbing, but turning wistful, perhaps. Horns might be honking now.)

Oh Angel, how impatiently I waited for your arrival, the daydreams I had of your bright blazing future, the sonograms I studied for signs of great genius or great beauty, the endless speculations of your temperament I made as I imagined you resting inside of me, floating, tethered to me, incubating and ignorant, preparing for your excursion into this cacophony of automotive noise pollution, this thick fog of exhaust, this vast, horrific, busy loneliness.

(Beat.)

How often have I feared what it all would do to you. The rampant materialism seen in the luxury cars that surround us, the toxic influence of the selfish, intolerant people behind their wheels, the infinite, dangerous variables they all introduce to your upbringing.... And I do fear for your upbringing. You will be challenged enough by just having *me* as an influence. Never mind everything else.

(Beat.)

I must will myself to bear it. Bear the brunt of this traffic, your shield, your armor. Just as I bore the pains of your labor. And how I could bear it, how breathlessly I anticipated just staring into your eyes, bottomless wells of the boldest blue. How I bore that pain for both of us. And I must do so again.

(She composes herself, sitting up, spine stiffening.)

I can! I can bear it. I can get through this traffic. I stand here with you, my child, and we, we are the origins of our civilization, the image of western religion, the foundation of the primary social unit, represented here, before this traffic jam, this audience of impassive faces, encased as they are in their cocoons of metal and steel. They seem to have forgotten the respect I am due as Mother. That's right, Mother-with-a-capital-M Mother! Their childhoods began in this my womb, their sustenance supplied from this my breast, the checks they write every month to pay the notes on their overpriced gas-guzzling tanks were written with the handwriting that I helped them perfect! Unless they do automatic bill-pay of course. But my point remains!

(Horns are honking, maybe some shouting.)

## MONA (CONT'D)

I may be overwhelmed by this, this journey, this terrifying white-painted bridge I am forced to cross just to get my Angel to her overpriced day-care so that I might proceed to work at a job for which I am both overqualified and underpaid, I may not think I can last another day with this burden, this weight, this constant, paralyzing terror of what fresh hell each new moment might bring, I might have contemplated on more than one occasion enveloping little Angel in a sheath of latex just to preserve what little peace I am able to find for myself, but I will not be intimidated by the masses in their unforgiving SUVs. You and I, my Angel, you and I will get this stroller across this intersection.

(Standing.)

I may be inadequate, I may be alone, I may not be able to give you much, my dear sweet Angel, but I will get you out of this intersection. I will get you out alive. I will get you out unharmed, even if it means--

(The screech of tires. MONA jerks the stroller back, then pushes forward again, the whole routine. The sound of more cars.)

Alright, that is IT!

(She stands in front of the baby carriage, facing out, making herself a human stop sign.)

STOP!

(The sound of brakes screeching. It is deafening.)

GOD HELP US!

(MONA closes her eyes, braces for impact. LIGHTS SHIFT. Silence for a moment, then, a baby cries. MONA opens her eyes.)

Angel, you will never believe this. The moment I opened my eyes, the cars evaporated into nothingness. Evaporated, then replaced by the image of a beautiful young woman. Your image. My Angel.

(Beat.)

But you have changed your name. To Henry. To my great puzzlement. I hope you'll forgive me for constantly correcting myself. Ang-- I mean, Henry. What kind of a name for a girl is Henry? I'll never understand it.

(Beat.)

But still, you are such a stunning creature, in spite of your apparent gender confusion. No, perhaps because of it. Yes. Precisely because of it. That, and all the myriad other surprises you will supply to me in this life.

## MONA (CONT'D)

The way I have imagined and planned, and the way those plans and imaginations are certain to be upended. And so gloriously do I see them upended in front of me now. You are a completely unexpected jewel. And you are righteously independent. And you have survived. We. Have survived.

(Beat.)

A second birth. A mother born to a newborn. A Mother-with-a-capital-M. And peacefully, pleasantly. The traffic of this life not insurmountable, not even threatening -- occasional, minor catastrophes notwithstanding. As Henry fades and all those cars take her place I feel a sadness, but she'll return soon enough. Right now there is only you. My little Angel. And her Mother. And we have a road to cross.

(MONA pushes the stroller to the other end of the crosswalk. LIGHTS SHIFT. The traffic noise continues. MONA takes the baby out of the stroller.)

There! Safe and sound.

CURTAIN